

6-1988

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 61, no. 6

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Rhode Island Library Association Bulletin

Volume No. 61 No.6

ISSN:0146-8685

JUNE 1988

ALTERNATIVE CAREERS IN LIBRARIANSHIP

With this issue, the Bulletin begins a series of articles on "alternative careers in librarianship." We plan to highlight various means by which a librarian practices the craft in other than traditional settings. As chance would have it, the annual GSLIS "Gathering" focused on one aspect of alternative career: that of information science as a business. Following is an account of the day's sessions. Covering the morning's session is Charlotte Schoonover, Librarian of the Kingston Free Library, alumna of the GSLIS, and Jobline Editor of the Bulletin.

The eleventh Annual Gathering of Alumni and Friends of the Graduate Library School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Rhode Island brought together fifty-seven active and interested librarians on Saturday, April 23, 1988. The program focused on the theme, "Librarians: Professional Commitment and Alternative Careers." Greetings and opening remarks were made by GSLIS Director, Elizabeth Futas.

The keynote speaker was Susan P. Klement, librarian, educator, consultant, and researcher, who operates her own business, Information Resources, in Toronto, Canada. Her dynamic presentation expanded on her motto, "You can be a librarian without a library, but there cannot be a library without a librarian." She defined the "alternative librarian" as one who practices the profession of librarianship in non-traditional ways which might include working for a bibliographic utility, marketing or producing databases, indexing and thesaurus construction, records management, information brokering, or publishing. The possibilities are more numerous today than even ten years ago.

Ms. Klement stressed that traditional and non-traditional practitioners of librarianship

have much to offer each other. Both need to recognize that the general public does not have a clear concept of what a library is and what a librarian does. It is important for librarians to help library users and owners of library collections to identify their information needs.

Two areas in which traditional librarians can learn from alternative librarians are those of library instruction and end user searching. Klement firmly believes that as librarians are trained professionals, their major function is to remove the burden of tracing information from the user. While users may have subject expertise, they don't have the technical expertise that would allow them to do the best search possible.

A final consideration should be over the issue of marketing. Klement states that marketing does not have to be a "dirty word;" that whether for profit or not, librarians must accept that they are involved in marketing a product. What is important to recognize is that marketing involves selling what the client wants to buy.

In conclusion, Klement recommended that librarians remember to emphasize the role

of the librarian, not just the importance of the book collection and the library building. All of us who have chosen the library field have something to offer each other, though our practices may be different.

An animated and, at times, heated question and answer period followed the talk.

In the afternoon, the theme of alternative careers in librarianship was expanded in a panel presentation and discussion, featuring information brokers in the New England area. Larry Kelland, Reference Librarian and Bibliographer in Life Sciences at the Library of URI summarized the session.

The panelists focused on how they became self-employed information consultants and on the skills needed for one to go into business for oneself.

Derryl Johnson of CD Research Ltd., became interested in libraries at the age of six, and worked in a bookmobile at fourteen. She later worked at the Providence Public Library and then formed her own company. The "CD" means "customer designed", as her information packets are put together in a format specified by the customer. She also calls on other specialized consultants, effectively multiplying the expertise she can draw on. Clients' usage and philosophical needs must be addressed, as each approaches the same question from a different perspective.

Joanna Walsh, of Walsh Associates, acts as a consultant to the two hundred librarians employed in Lexington, Massachusetts. She stressed that, to succeed as a consultant, one needs knowledge of the profession, business skills, time management and communication skills.

Patricia Watkins, of Foster Parents Plan International, described her childhood interests in wildlife, physics and "how things work," and libraries. All these interests have helped her in her career. She currently answers basic reference questions, questions from field offices (of Foster Parents Plan International) in third world countries, and works with databases on computers. She will go to Kenya next year to learn how the field offices use and store information.

The question and answer period was lively. Several questions focused on finances, how to

start one's own consultation business, and the problem of NTIS (National Technical Information Service) privatisation.

In subsequent issues, the Bulletin will expand on themes introduced in this account of the "Gathering," and introduce other alternatives.

SPRING BUSINESS MEETING AIRS CRUCIAL ISSUES

About forty concerned members of RILA met at the Cranston Public Library on May 23, for the Spring Business Meeting.

Although a number of issues was discussed, the most heated discussion centered on the need for the Association to employ an "executive officer." Discussion of the role and duties of an executive officer was led by Fran Farrell-Bergeron, who has chaired an Ad Hoc Committee charged with the responsibility of defining the position and its advantages to the Association. (A detailed account of the findings of the Committee can be found in April's Bulletin.)

Discussion led to identifying two different types of executive officer:

1. A Public Information Officer, or PIO, described by the Ad Hoc Committee in its report. The PIO would effectively become the voice of RILA in the state, and would react to library issues and speak out upon them. Such a person conceivably would become identified with the organization in the same sense that Steve Brown is associated with the ACLU. Because RILA's Executive Board changes annually, there is no one person that is identified as the voice of the Association.

In addition to being a spokesperson, the PIO could provide a "sustained memory" for RILA policies and procedures. At present, too much time is wasted hashing over the same issues from year to year as the Executive Board changes hands. A PIO could organize policies, co-ordinate activities, advise the Board on past issues, as well as issue statements on library policy to the public on a regular basis. Questions such as whether the PIO would serve as a lobbyist, or program planner, or conference liaison were also brought up by the group.

Questions emerged on the possibility of one person's performing so many duties. It was also felt that the Executive Board itself should set the policy and be the voice of RILA. Hence, a second theory of executive officer emerged.

2. Executive Secretary. Many members of RILA feel that a major reason for dwindling enthusiasm and involvement in the organization grows out of the weight of performing "housekeeping" chores. For example, the Membership Chair spends enormous amounts of time maintaining a mailing list; the treasurer must keep records, pay bills, prepare budgets; even the Bulletin editor spends a good deal of time paying bills and keeping track of subscriptions. It was felt that if some of these more clerical tasks could be handled by a single person, it would free the Board and Committee Chairs to be more creative and productive. The problem of "burn-out" among the membership is a real concern, and perhaps an "executive secretary" could provide an organizational structure that members could work within.

Discussion concluded with the group's expression of general support of the idea of such a position, with the strong suggestion that further definition of the job's description be written. The Bulletin will carry further position papers on both concepts of the "executive officer" in subsequent issues.

Two other major issues emerging at the Spring Business Meeting should be noted by the membership at large. One is the need to modify the dues structure. Various options were suggested, including the need to separate student rates from other categories. The group clearly felt that a revised dues structure is long over-due, and instructed Bill Bergeron, current Treasurer, to re-consider the proposed dues structure. The Bulletin will keep membership current on this issue.

Amendments to the Constitution were passed regarding nominations and elections. RILA members who desire specific copies of the amendments should contact a member of the Executive Board, or the Managing Editor of the Bulletin. Members, however, should pay special attention to the following change in the nominating process:

Additional nominations may be made to the Executive Board by petition of 10% of the voting membership of the Association for each position. Petitions for

additional nominations shall be submitted to the Executive Board by the September Executive Board meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Fran Farrell-Bergeron, Nominating Chair, announced the following candidates for the 1988 Executive Board election:

Vice-President/President Elect:

Carol DiPrete, Roger Williams College
Patricia Jensen, GSLIS

Secretary:

Ruth Corkill, Barrington Public Library
Deborah Lynden, Providence Public Library

Treasurer:

Judith Bell, Jamestown Philomenian Library
Tanya Trinkaus, Roger Williams College Library

Member-at-Large:

John Etchingham, URI Library
Eileen Socha, Warren's George Hail Library

ALA Councilor:

Howard Boksenbaum, DSLS
Fay Zipkowitz, GSLIS

NELA Councilor:

Charlotte Schoonover, Kingston Free Library
Helen Mochetti, Westerly Public Library

Additional information on the Nominating Committee and its procedures, as well as biographical information on the candidates will appear in the July-August Bulletin.

This account of the Spring Business Meeting was prepared by the Managing Editor of the Bulletin. Minutes of the meeting are available from Susan Aylward, Secretary.

AN URGENT APPEAL TO RILA MEMBERS!

There is a DESPERATE need for volunteers to work on the annual SALARY SURVEY. Because a Personnel Committee does not exist at the moment, the production of the survey must be carried out by willing RILA members. Please contact with Ann Crawford, (1) 364-6211, or Kathleen Metrick, 434-2453.

TWO NEW VIDEOS



Basic Book Repair with Jane Greenfield

Videocassette. 30 minutes. 1987. ISBN 0-8242-0760-2. Color/VHS/Hi-Fi, with *Viewer's Guide*. \$89 U.S. and Canada, \$99 other countries.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Book Repair

Now, there is an inexpensive alternative to costly rebinding and high-priced preservation: *Do It Yourself!* Designed especially for librarians and archivists, *BASIC BOOK REPAIR with Jane Greenfield* is a step-by-step video guide to the types of repair and maintenance you can do yourself—easily and inexpensively!

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- Repairing broken or shaken book hinges.
- Restoring flapping book spines.

The *Viewer's Guide* which accompanies the video provides detailed instructions for each of the repair procedures illustrated on the tape.

Also of Interest

Books: Their Care and Repair

By Jane Greenfield. 204pp. 1984. ISBN 0-8242-0695-9. \$30 U.S. and Canada, \$35 other countries.

Offering step-by-step instructions for more than twenty book and page repairs, this handbook also includes information on pamphlet binding, exhibition techniques, and setting up a small bindery.

Making Friends Organizing Your Library's Friends Group

Produced in Cooperation with Friends of Libraries, U.S.A. (FOLUSA)

Videocassette. 23 minutes. 1987. ISBN 0-8242-0759-9. Color/VHS/Hi-Fi, with *Viewer's Guide* and ALA's Friends of Libraries *Sourcebook* and *Resource Packet*. \$59 U.S. and Canada, \$69 other countries.

Why Every Library Needs Friends

Friends of Libraries have been active for decades across the country—helping local libraries raise money and improve services to the community. If you would like to organize a friends group to help expand and enrich your library, this new video shows you how.

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in Canada call collect 212-588-8400.



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A CALL FOR TEMPORARY/PART-TIME LIBRARIANS

The Publications Committee is currently running a series in the Bulletin called, "Alternatives to Librarianship." As a result of this series we have determined that there is a need in the library community to publicize those librarians (MLS) interested in working part-time hours or as temporary librarians. This list of librarians would include those willing to work weekends, evenings, and as temporary replacements for those on vacation, sick leave, paternity leave, or sabbatical. Institutions needing a part-time/temporary librarian could then access this list to fill their need. If this program is successful, the listing will be kept updated and published in the Bulletin periodically.

All librarians interested in having their names included in this listing, to be published in the Bulletin, should complete the form below and submit it to:

Linda Walton
Butler Hospital
345 Blackstone Boulevard
Providence, RI 02906

When filling out the form be as specific or broad as fits your need. Linda will contact individuals if she is unclear about your statement. If you have any questions please call her at 456-3869.

TEMPORARY/PART-TIME LIBRARIAN

NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

REGION(S): (i.e. Providence, Island, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.)

TIME(S): (i.e. days, evenings, weekends, weekly, monthly, etc.)

INSTITUTION: (i.e. academic, public, school, special, etc.)

bulletin board

- Librarians, especially those serving young adults, are invited to attend a workshop on AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) at the Cranston Public Library on Wednesday, June 8th from 10AM to 3PM. The workshop will present an overview of the causes and symptoms of AIDS and current research on cures and prevention. The afternoon will be devoted to resources appropriate for young adults. Janet Hodge, AIDS Education Coordinator at the Rhode Island Department of Health will present the workshop. While there is no cost for the workshop, participants will be charged \$7.00 for lunch and refreshments. Those wishing to register should contact Margaret Shea at the Department of State Library Services.

- Secretary of State Kathleen S. Connell hosted librarians and volunteers from across the state at a special ceremony at the State House on Monday, April 18th. Secretary Connell read a proclamation from the Governor and presented the State Library Logo. Honored at the ceremony were volunteers recommended by their librarians for a special citation. This was the first presentation of the Secretary of State's Library Volunteer Recognition Awards. Senator Victoria Lederberg, chair of the Special Legislative Study Commission on Statewide Library Funding, also spoke to the group.

- A new brochure describing the State Publications Clearinghouse for Libraries and listing all 23 depository libraries, has been published by the office of Secretary of State, Kathleen Connell. In addition to providing information on the state publications depositories, those libraries serving as federal depositories are also noted. The brochures have been sent to all Rhode Island libraries and state agencies and additional copies can be obtained by contacting Beth Perry or Gretchen Pfeffer at the State Library.

- Arch Lustberg, who has presented workshops for libraries in Rhode Island based on his books Testifying With Impact and Winning at Confrontation, has authored Winning When It Counts: Quick, Easy Strategies for Success in Any Speaking Situation, published this month by Simon and Schuster.

- The traditional New England Library Association Counterparts Day will be Friday,

June 24, at Salve Regina College in Newport. The program, scheduled for 10 AM to 3 PM, will include working sessions where state association officers can meet with their "Counterparts" from other states and from NELA for idea exchange and problem solving. In addition to sessions for elected officers, there will be groups concentrating on legislative issues, membership, intellectual freedom, conference planning, and other topical issues.

As part of this year's expanded Counterparts program, NELA will present a special session on Thursday, June 23 from 1-4 PM, dealing with library association membership issues. Willine Mahoney, the Executive Director of the Illinois Library Association, will share her extensive experience in this area in a program titled "Attract, Involve, and Retain."

calendar


JUNE 14: Young Adult Round Table, Organizational Meeting, 9:30 AM, Department of State Library Services.

JUNE 15: Interlibrary Loan Subcommittee's Annual Meeting for users of the Electronic Mail System, 9:30AM, Warwick Public Library.

JUNE 23-24: "Counterparts," 1988. Salve Regina College, Newport, RI. (See "Bulletin Board")

JULY 9-14: ALA Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.

AUGUST 9: Celebration of the Centennial of the American Mathematical Society. Exhibition and reception from 6-7:30PM at the John Hay Library.



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CLAN PURCHASES CD-CAT

by Peter Bennett

CLAN has reached an agreement with CLSI, Inc. for the purchase of CLSI's new CD-ROM Public Access Catalog called CD-CAT. CLAN will be CLSI's first customer for CD-CAT and has had input into the initial design of the product. CLAN will also be working with CLSI in the further development of CD-CAT.

One hundred eleven CD-CAT workstations will be distributed throughout the CLAN system. The project is being funded by a DSLS grant of \$29,394 for database mastering and disk replicas, and a \$307,925 grant from the Champlin Foundation for system hardware and database extraction. CD-CAT should be available in CLAN libraries by July of 1988.

CD-CAT will be searchable in both browse and key-word modes and will operate similarly to CLSI's on-line PAC, CL-CAT. Indexing of the database for CL-CAT is taking place at the Providence Public Library, and the on-line system should also be available at Providence in the summer of this year. The initial database for both systems will contain 250,000 - 300,000 MARC records and will grow to over 400,000 records within a year as the CLAN retrospective conversion project moves toward completion.

CLAN has voted to make the CD-ROM database available to any non-CLAN Rhode Island library at a reasonable cost. CLAN will also make its database available as part of a Statewide Database project under the guidelines recommended by the Statewide Database Task Force. CLSI has agreed to provide CLAN with hardware specifications in order to facilitate the distribution and operation of CLAN's CD-ROM database on non-CLSI equipment.

CD-CAT workstations will include a Wyse 2108 PC with a 1.2 MB single floppy disk drive and a ZOMB hard disk, plus a Hitachi CD-ROM disk drive and controller.

Peter Bennett is Chief of Technical Services, Providence Public Library, and a member of the Publications Committee.

people

Two RILA members, NORMAN DESMARAIS and JON TRYON, are involved in workshops

sponsored by AJ Seminars, an organization which gives seminars on topics in major cities throughout the United States on various aspects of library and information science. Norman Desmarais, Acquisitions Librarian at Providence College, gave a workshop on "Optical Information Systems" (see his article on "Meeting the Need for High-Density Storage Media: an Update on Discs" in the May 1988 issue of the Bulletin) on May 25. Jon Tryon, former president of RILA and professor at the GSLIS, will give a seminar on "Collection Development and Management" on June 22. Venue for both workshops is the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Information on the workshops may be obtained from AJ Seminars, 11205 Farmland Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

GEORGE BLANCHARD, who has been actively involved with vendors at RILA annual conferences for many years, will be given a lifetime achievement award at the 1988 Conference. Blanchard retired earlier this spring from Acme Bookbinding, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SUSAN DUNN, Reference Librarian at PPL, will become Coordinator of Adult Services at Warwick Public Library in July.

JANICE DiFRANCO, former Deputy Director of the Warwick Public Library, will now serve as Coordinator of Film Services at the Rhode Island Library Film Cooperative on a part-time basis.

CAROL DROUGHT has been promoted to Deputy Director at the Warwick Public Library effective July 1st.

At the Rhode Island State Library, GRETCHEN PFEFFER has been named Director of the State Publications Clearinghouse for Libraries and THOMAS EVANS has been appointed Legislative Reference Librarian.

DOLORES TANSEY recently was named Director of Tiverton Library Services.

HOWARD BOKSENBAUM, presently Coordinator of the Island Interrelated Library System, will become Supervisor of Automation Services at DSLS on July 8th.

ROBERTA CAIRNS has been elected president of the East Providence Chamber of Commerce.

LETTER FROM RILA'S NELA COUNCILOR

Have you ever considered joining the New England Library Association, but kept putting it off? Perhaps you are a former member who has just not bothered to renew your membership. Why not do so today? The cost is only \$5.00 for a student or first-time member, and no more than \$20.00 for a renewing or rejoining member. There are at least five good reasons to join; and it is not too late to take advantage of most of them.

1. First of all, your membership entitles you to a subscription to the bi-monthly NELA Newsletter, with feature articles and news reports on libraries, librarians and library-related issues from the six New England states.

2. Secondly, you will receive advance information on, and membership rates to, the New England Library Association's Annual Conference, as well as programs sponsored by its several Sections and Round Tables. A sampling of recent offerings included the May 5th-6th Academic Librarians Section conference "Preserve or Perish: Will Our Collections Survive?", co-sponsored with ACRL New England Chapter; the May 10th New England Technical Services Librarians Section offering on "Shifting Boundaries: Impact of Automation on Library Organization"; and the Round Table of Children's Librarians annual Jordan-Mille Storytelling Program on June 10th, with this year's featured guest, Australian author and storyteller Mem Fox. Other seminars and conferences are scheduled from time to time, with NELA members receiving advance mailings on the programs.

3. Another distinct advantage is membership eligibility to participate in discounted air fares and hotel reservation fees for ALA Conferences, with savings of up to 65%.

4. Not to be overlooked is NELA's Continuing Education Grants, which can subsidize up to 50% of the cost of workshops, courses, institutes, seminars, preconferences and other study opportunities not leading to a degree.

5. Last to be mentioned here are NELA's scholarship opportunities. NELA membership includes eligibility for:

a. the \$1,000 annual scholarship, providing financial assistance for a worthy student pursuing a Master's Degree in Library Science;

b. one of the six NELA Conference scholarships, awarded annually to one person from each of the New England states who has never before attended a NELA Annual Conference.

If you are already a NELA member, or interested in becoming one, and would like further information on any of the workshops, scholarships, grants or other NELA offerings, please contact NELA Councilor, Janet A. Levesque, at the Cumberland Public Library, 1464 Diamond Hill Road, Cumberland, RI 02864, or phone 401-333-2552.

Membership applications are still available!

LINDSAY NAMED TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR

William Lindsay, trustee of the Cross' Mills Public Library in Charlestown, has been named the 1988 RILA Trustee of the Year. Mr. Lindsay has served on the Board of Trustees since 1979 and is currently serving his second and final term as its President. Ann Crawford, Director-Librarian of Cross' Mills, cites Mr. Lindsay's dedicated efforts toward the building of the library's addition. Moreover, Mr. Lindsay involved himself in RILA activities, not only becoming a member, but also attending many state-wide workshops in an effort to further his understanding of fund-raising and trusteeship in general.

Brendan Murphy, past Vice President of the Cross' Mills Board of Trustees writes the following testimony to Mr. Lindsay's dedication and involvement in library activities:

Like many other public institutions, most libraries depend, to some degree, upon the volunteers who give their time, labor, and money so that the libraries may comfortably survive.

The Cross' Mills Public Library in Charlestown has been the particular beneficiary of the care and work of William ("Bill") Lindsay. He is now approaching the end of his second term

as President of the Board of Trustees. In his two terms, he has devoted extraordinary hours - in many roles - to help the library maintain its role in serving the community. The work he has performed for the library has been on a schedule that many would regard as a full-time job. He has not been content to simply discharge his duty to conduct the monthly Board meeting and other routine duties. He has done much more than that. It is often easier to reach him by telephone at the library than at his home. He will be found there, installing a light fixture, building a book or record case, mounting a bulletin board, consulting with the librarian on programs and work schedules. Nothing involving the library is beyond his concern, time, or labor.

At the annual fund-raising Arts & Crafts Festival, he can be seen everywhere supervising, or doing, the many chores that make the day a success: putting in the parking markers, cooking the hot-dogs, calling the raffle winners, or helping with the clean-up.

In June of 1986, the library dedicated an addition to the library building, more than doubling its physical capacity and ability to serve the community. The fulfillment of the dream, the fund-raising, the negotiations with the architect and contractor, and all the other details were accomplished by the guiding mind and leadership of Bill Lindsay. What he could not do himself, usually because of time limitations, he inspired and stimulated others to do, often to a degree beyond what they would think were their limitations.

It was only fitting that one of the wings of the new addition was formally dedicated with a plaque reading "The William Lindsay Room".

The Cross' Mills Public Library and the residents of Charlestown, present and future, owe a great debt to Bill Lindsay.

The award, a plaque in blue and silver, was made at the Spring Business Meeting of RILA on May 23.

FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

On March 15, the following news item appeared in the Bay State Letter, which represents news of the Massachusetts Library Association:

"The PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S PLA Bulletin of January/February 1988 contains a fascinating account of a tragic event. According to the PLA Bulletin 'On October 30, 1985, Sylvia Seegrist gunned down 10 people at the Springfield Mall in Delaware County, killing three and wounding seven. During that day before her rampage in the mall, Sylvia did as she had many times before-she visited the Swarthmore Public Library.' This woman's circulation records became part of an 'intense investigation into' this crime. The article is 'A Court Encounter' by the Director at the time, Janis M. Lee. Later PLA Bulletins will carry other comments."

RILA members may secure the article through ILL channels, or make inquiry to Frank Iacono at DSLS.

jobline

The Rhode Island Library Association has established a minimum recommended salary of \$20,000 for a full-time beginning librarian in 1988.

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN: East Greenwich Free Library. MLS required. 35 hours/week. Salary: \$18,200. Send resume and three references to Karen Taylor, East Greenwich Free Library, 82 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

HEAD OF TECHNICAL SERVICES sought for Boston suburb of 25,000. Department head to work with Director and Assistant Director (Head of Public Services) in formulating public service policies and technical service procedures. Duties include cataloging and data entry, implementing automation developments, supervising 2-3 person staff, some budgeting and reference. Candidates must have MLS, 2 years library experience including cataloging responsibilities, familiarity with MARC format, automation experience (library uses CLSI), and demonstrated commitment to public service. House: 35½ per week, including two evenings and alternate Saturdays. Salary: \$23,849.80 to \$28,106.00 in five steps. Position available July 1st. Apply to Sharon A. Gilley, Library Director, Beebe Library, Main Street, Wakefield, Massachusetts 01880.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN-L-II - Oversees and manages the library's special collections which include 100 original whaling logs, an extensive printing collection and substantial collections of material relating to Irish culture. Specific duties include: setting acquisition priorities; selection, acquisition and original cataloging of appropriate materials; direct assistance to users of the collections; reviewing open collections to identify rare or important materials. The Special Collections Librarian also plans and implements programs and special projects involving Special Collections; publicizes and promotes use of the collections; consults with and advises library staff on the preservation of materials. Requirements: MLS from an ALA accredited institution; 1 to 2 years experience or special training in rare book librarianship required. Direct experience managing special collections/rare book department preferred. Salary: \$21,000 - \$26,250. Applications accepted until position is filled. Apply to: Dan Austin, Personnel Officer, Providence Public Library, 150 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903. Telephone: (401) 521-8761. An affirmative action/equal employment opportunity employer.

Recently while visiting family in Nashville, Tennessee, I visited the Nashville Public Library. It was the first time I consciously visited a library in another city as a professional librarian. The underlying thesis to such a visit is that by observation, one can identify similarities and differences between two library situations, a process which sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of both institutions.

Nashville is located in the rolling hills of middle Tennessee, and is probably best known for being the home of the Grand Old Opry. Nashville has always been a little embarrassed by this recognition, and would far rather be remembered for its identifying slogan as the "Athens of the South." This slogan grows out of the presence of a number of educational institutions, including Vanderbilt University, the former George Peabody College (which has a fine library school now incorporated within the Vanderbilt aegis), Fisk University, an outstanding black university, known for many things including a fine chorus, the Jubilee Singers, and numerous religious educational institutions. (Indeed, Nashville as the center of a number of headquarters for various Protestant denominations, has been called "the Protestant Vatican.")

As the "Athens of the South," Nashville constructed an exact replica of the Parthenon to celebrate its centennial in 1879. The stucco structure still stands in Centennial Park, and was used by Robert Altman in the terrifying denouement of his film "Nashville."

One cultural heritage that Nashville and Providence share is the existence in each city of buildings designed by the outstanding nineteenth century architect William Strickland. Strickland, who designed the Providence Athenaeum, also designed several public buildings in Nashville, including the State Capitol, on whose grounds he is buried.

Though the Nashville Public Library is located in the center of downtown Nashville, it stands on land once owned and occupied by James K. Polk, eleventh president of the United States. The library was founded in 1904 with money specifically designated for the purpose by the Polk estate, and with additional funding from Andrew Carnegie. Its first librarian was a woman named Mary Hannah Johnson, known

then, as she still is today, as "Miss Hannah."

Today, the Nashville Public Library is a handsome modern building with two-storied arched windows that let in light and, on the day of my visit, views of cherry blossoms and a brilliant blue sky. My parents, now in their mid-seventies, make a weekly visit to the library on Saturday afternoon, partly because parking is much easier then. I did notice a parking garage underneath the library designated for staff, and I understand that there is some limited municipal parking space for patrons. Nonetheless, there as here, parking for downtown libraries is a major problem.

I was greeted very courteously by the librarian at the check-out desk, who also was the "duty officer," or Head Librarian of the day. William Warren, who began work at the library in 1958 and became my unofficial guide to the library, is a wonderful example of that southern quality of graciously sharing with their guests, their pride and love of their city, their library, their history. Perhaps this is one way of showing "southern hospitality"!

In the fifties and sixties, when I was growing up in Nashville, the population was 170,874 (based on the 1960 census), a city roughly the size of Providence today. However, in the late sixties, Nashville and Davidson County, were merged, expanding its population to 455,877 (1970 census). Today, Nashville boasts a metropolitan form of government, which they refer to as "metro." Metro includes, not only Nashville and Davidson county, but seven additional surrounding counties as well, which swells its population to 850,000, approximately 100,000 less than the state of Rhode Island, and 200,000 more than the city of Boston. ALA statistics cite Nashville's library population as 531,200, and Boston's as 563,000.

The Nashville Public Library system (or Metro library system) consists of its downtown library and sixteen branch libraries and a bookmobile division. The main library is open from 9 AM to 8 PM every day of the week, until 5 PM on Saturday. It is open on Sundays from October to May.

The main library offers the community some rather extraordinary services. It is one of only two libraries in the country whose Public Broadcasting Radio Station is owned and operated by the library. WPLN has been on the air since 1962, and covers roughly an area of about forty-five miles. Its programs compare in content to those of WGBH, though a glance through its Program Guide seemed to show many more discussion programs on politics, the arts, and of course, books. Like WGBH, it also has its fund-raising season, and boasts a comfortable list of underwriters who sponsor various programs.

In addition to its regular programming, WPLN offers the "Talking Library," a broadcast reading service offered through a closed-circuit receiver given by the library and offering programs to the visually-handicapped. The service has a small, paid staff, but depends on hundreds of volunteers who read or time tapes to run on the air. Programs range from Shopping Basket, which informs listeners of sales in local stores, From the Bookshelf which features tapes of current best sellers, to various programs highlighting different handicaps. The Talking Library also has its own WPLN Calendar, provided in both large print and in Braille. (The entire newspaper is read, not just the newstories, but the advertisements and obituaries!)

In addition to serving the visually-handicapped, the Library also offers service for the hearing-impaired. Established in 1978, it began as a 24-hour automated TDD News service and a specialized book collection relating to hearing impairment. Programs include "Statewide News", a calendar relating club meetings, film showings, offered to the hearing-impaired, "TDD News", international, national, state and local news and weather, and special features changed daily.

No account of the special services of the Nashville Public Library is complete without mention of the Tom Tichenor Marionettes. On the stage of its auditorium, a small but very useful performing room, is the puppet stage, where every Saturday afternoon during "puppet season," Tichenor, a nationally-trained and acknowledged puppeteer, and two assistants offer a show. The current show was Thumbelina. Now sixty years old, Tichenor has been working at the library for seventeen years and has created a host of puppet characters, from tail-coated frogs to beautiful princesses.

It would be difficult not to be impressed with the charm of the children's room, with its fireplace, exposed beams, dolls and toys, and a girl's bathroom marked "Little Women" and its counterpart "Little Men." On the door of the children's room was a discreet but definite sign which said "Please do not expect the librarians to babysit." Posted also were additional rules, such as not being responsible for children of six years or older, or for children whose parents were not on library premises.

As a reference librarian, I did "check out" the Reference Department. Largely general reference, the department does offer business reference as a special service, with its own librarian, desk, and phone. A chat with Reference Head, Leigh Connell, however, intimated that this service will probably be phased out when the present librarian retires. As one often sees in libraries, her position will not be filled, and the departments will be merged. Two other areas relevant to Rhode Island problems that I asked him about were "who does city archives?" Answer: librarians do, but in a separate building, with its own staff, devoted only to archival maintenance. The other question I had for him was "who indexes the local papers?" I had noticed large black binders containing fiche indexes to the two local papers, The Nashville Tennessean and The Nashville Banner. The story of the index was that it has changed over the years. Like our own at PPL, it was once a card file, manually done. Now, however, one librarian, plus clerical staff, use the metro computer system to put it on a database, and make it retrievable to patrons through the fiche I saw on the reference tables. The reference collection was good, and compared very favorably to that of the PPL.

One thing I did notice was that the collection was highly current. There were no back stacks of retrospective material such as is available at PPL. I later learned from literature that library staff prepared for me, that the Nashville Public Library has never seen itself as a research institution. Indeed, until 1984, that function was filled by the Vanderbilt Library, which was accessible to the public until then.

Always thinking that we in Rhode Island are behind and not ahead of new developments,

I was surprised to see that circulation is not automated in Nashville yet, and that William Warren, my guide, was still sorting out those old orange cards in file boxes! Also, I was surprised that the collection is still cataloged in the Dewey Decimal System.

Back in Rhode Island, I found in the packet of materials prepared for me, a major article on the Nashville Library that appeared in the Nashville Banner in September of 1987. Entitled "Vicious circle cramps Metro library service," the article brought home to me the truth that all libraries have problems, perhaps not the same ones, but problems nonetheless.

According to the article, and to its director, Caroline Stark, Nashville's library is severely beset by a book-poor collection. Statistics show that Nashville has the third lowest books-per-capita ration of the thirty-six library systems across the country serving between 500,000 and one million people. Despite what seems to be a burgeoning economy typical of the Sun Belt, Nashville spent only \$11.14 per person overall on its libraries in 1986, barely half what Newark, New Jersey, spent that year and less than a third of what Cleveland spent on its system. The ALA Directory lists Nashville as holding only 1.12 books per person, contrasted with Boston, which holds 9.2.

On the other hand, Librarian Stark, emphasizes the quality of the collection, and its attempt to eliminate out-of-date books and the best sellers of yesteryear, replacing them with

current and high-demand selections. Clearly, the Nashville library emphasizes a current collection that meets the needs of its community. Nashville circulated 3.53 books per capita according to the Banner, ranking it fourth among nine regional cities its surveyed, including Memphis, which is the largest library in the state. (Nashville is third, with Vanderbilt sandwiched between them.)

In terms of our problems in Rhode Island, I was struck by this comment by Joan Garcia, chairwoman of ALA's Goals, Guidelines and Standards Committee. The (library) "is often a reflection of the perception a city has of itself..the cities that feel a library system is an integral part of a city usually are better funded. Those politicians who feel libraries are a frill...will generally ignore the library system."

I began my visit to the Nashville Public Library in an attempt to learn something about libraries and their problems, and to see if that learning would shed any light on problems facing libraries in Rhode Island. I am still thinking about what insights I have gained, and may yet come to verbalize them. Meantime, I would recommend these "busmen's holiday" visits to other libraries around the country. Also, I would say that for my parents, the Nashville Public Library and its branches are far from being a "frill," but are instead, a vital part of their everyday life.

The RILA BULLETIN is published 10 times per year by the Rhode Island Library Association. Managing Editor: Judith Paster, 52 Seaview Avenue, Cranston, RI 02905 (467-8898); Assistant Editor: Peter Bennett, Providence Public Library, 150 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903 (521-8753); Co-Feature Editor: Norman Desmarais, Providence College, Phillips Memorial Library, Providence, RI 02918 (865-2241); Co-Feature Editor: Tanya Trinkaus, Roger Williams College Library, Old Ferry Road, Bristol, RI 02809 (253-1040); News Editor: Frank Iacono, DSLS, 95 Davis Street, Providence, RI 02908 (277-2726); Technical Editor: Veronica Thomas, East Providence Public Library, 41 Grove Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914 (434-2453); Jobline: Charlotte Schoonover, Kingston Free Library, 2605 Kingstown Road, Kingston, RI 02881 (783-8254); Advertising: Linda Walton, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence, RI 02906 (456-3869). Subscriptions: Free to members; \$12/year in U.S.; \$20/year foreign. Deadlines: 1st of the month for features and 15th of the month for everything else. Features limited to four typed double-spaced pages and must be signed by author. Advertising: \$100 full page; \$50 half page; \$30 quarter page; \$10 business card size. Change of address: members contact the Membership Committee Chair and subscriptions contact the Managing Editor. Send claims to Managing Editor. For further information contact the appropriate Editor. Printing by Adams Printing Company, 1506 Elmwood Avenue, Cranston, RI 02910 (461-1020) LC 57-26438.

Rhode Island Library Association
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